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Vincent G. Kling

(Editor's Note: When Architect Vincent G. Kling designed the new Pottstown, Pa., Hospital, he made a bold departure from traditional hospital construction. In doing so, he won the Philadelphia A. I. A. Bronze Chapter Medal for the "Architect whose exhibit shows a quality of outstanding attainment in architectural design for a completed project.")

Above: Lightweight, porcelain enamel curtain wall simplifies the design and erection of this huge "egg crate" sun barrier on the new hospital in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the Indian red panels give a distinctive, non-institutional appearance to the attractive structure. Panels fabricated by Seaporcel Metals, Inc., Long Island City, New York.

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discusses exterior design of his AWARD-WINNING POTTSTOWN HOSPITAL

By Vincent G. Kling, A. I. A.

Early investigations in planning the proposed Pottstown Hospital in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, brought to light several problems that we found challenging.

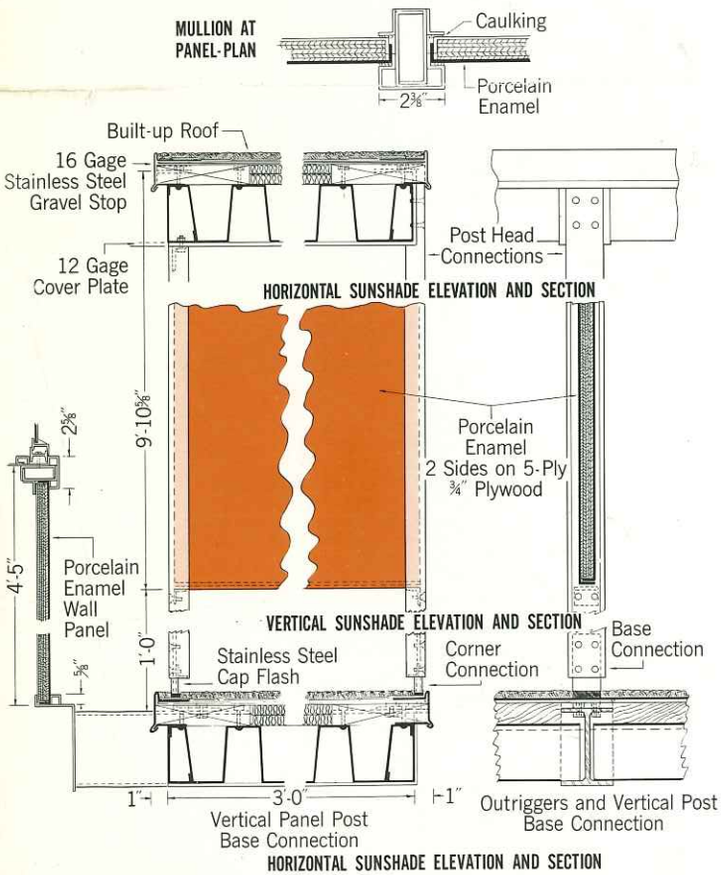
For one, the new structure had to be erected on the site of the old hospital, with minimum interference to normal functions during the construction period. To make best use of the site, we decided to erect the new building through the center of the old. The two ends of the old hospital continued to serve the community until the new building was ready for occupancy.

Location of the new building meant that one face would be directly exposed to the southwest sun . . . an unhappy situation unless we could keep the sun's rays out of the rooms without also eliminating much of the light.

It was this requirement of solar control that actually set the pattern for the general design of the facade. By that, I mean that we solved the problem of direct sun by devising a huge "egg crate" of horizontal and vertical porcelain enamel barriers.

With this modular expression setting the pace, a paneled wall treatment was chosen to complement the over-all scheme. Thus, the large porcelain enamel curtain wall panels became an integral part of our design.

To satisfy a strong desire on our part to make the building bright and cheerful, we chose Indian red porcelain enamel from the wide range of colors available. With porcelain enamel, we feel we have given the Pottstown Hospital building a lifetime finish that won't fade and will be practically maintenance-free.



TYPICAL PANEL DETAILS

Kept Down Noise, Dust

Fortunately, the erection of curtain wall creates very little dust, debris, and noise. So we had a minimum of disturbance to normal hospital operations in the old building. Thus, another of our major problems was solved as a direct result of methods used in solving others.

Fire-safety and sound-absorption were important considerations in planning this five-story building. The porcelain enamel panels, rigidized with a honeycomb core and back-up sheet, were set in a stainless steel grid. To meet the city's code requirements, the entire assembly was backed up with a masonry wall consisting of four inches of precast Diacrete panels. Wall to wall convector covers supplied the interior finish of the exterior wall. (Many building codes no longer require masonry back-up walls for porcelain enamel curtain wall. Ed.)

The finished building not only enjoys the highest possible fire rating, but is strong enough to support additional weight for more stories should expansion become necessary in the future.